



SAMBAH NEWS

August 2014

SAMBAH is an international LIFE+ funded project involving all EU countries around the Baltic Sea, with the ultimate goal to secure the conservation of the Baltic Sea Harbour porpoise.

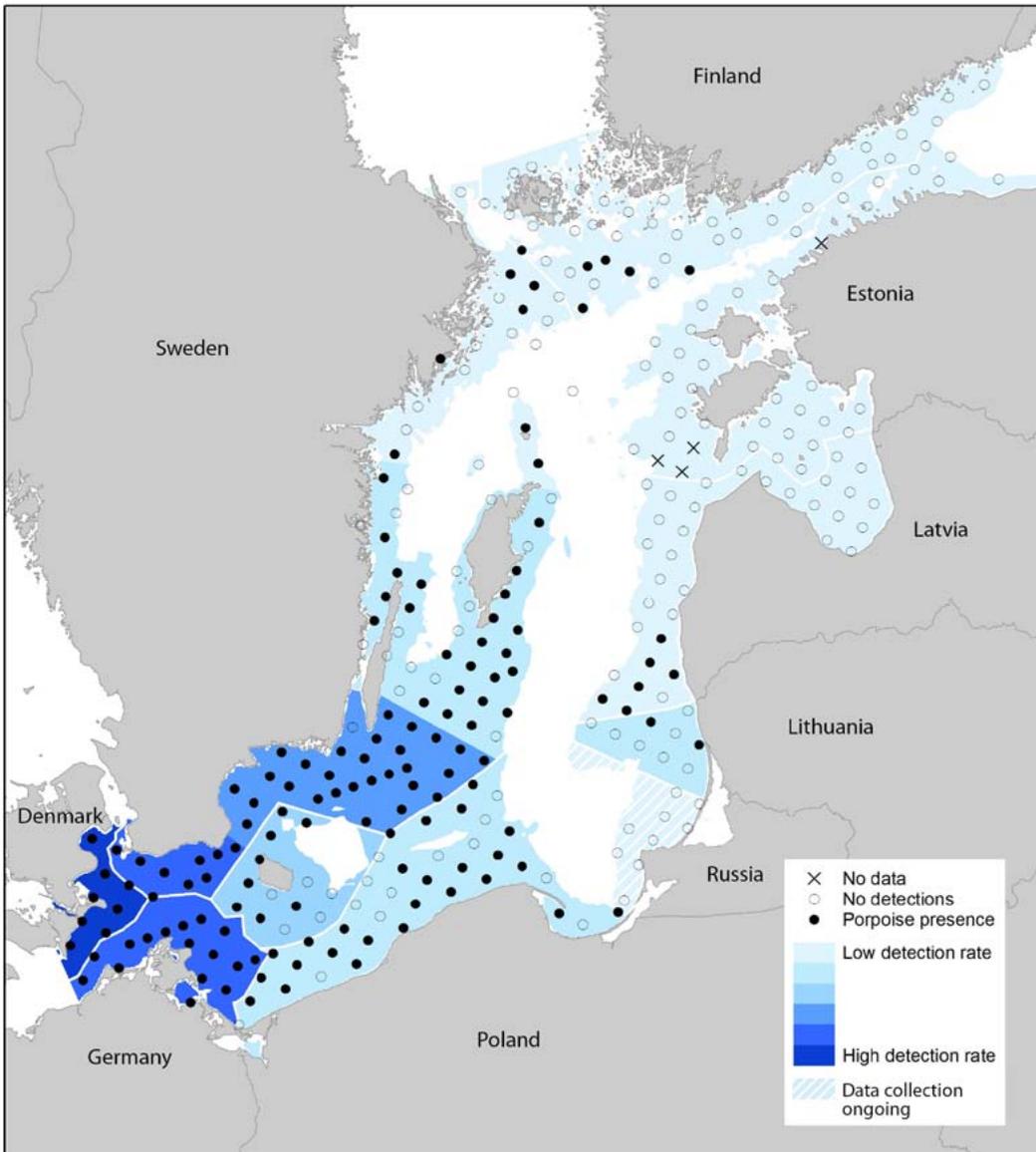
SAMBAH current status

After completing the project field work in the summer of 2013, much time and effort have been devoted to securing the CPOD data quality. The CPOD system includes sophisticated algorithms to extract true porpoise click trains from the data. A special version of this algorithm, adapted to Baltic conditions, has been developed and validated. Also the metadata, including for example time of deployment, time of retrieval, geographical position etc has been meticulously checked.

Of the total possible 608 years of data, SAMBAH managed to recover

68%, corresponding to 413 years of data, a recovery rate that we are very pleased with. Needless to say, this is the largest passive acoustic monitoring data set in the world collected to date.

As expected the number of click detections was highest in the South/South-West of the Baltic and became more rare to the North and East. Relative densities were slightly higher than expected along the Swedish coast of eastern Skåne and Blekinge, and there was a relatively high number of detections in the waters that include the shallow banks South of Öland and Gotland.



SAMBAH positions with at least one detection during the two-year field period are shown as black dots in the map.

The COSAMM array experiment and SAMBAH density analyses

In 2012 and 2013, the German Oceanographic Museum led the COSAMM hydrophone array study with the aim to evaluate different Passive Acoustic Monitoring instruments by acoustically tracking porpoises underwater in the vicinity of a matrix of CPODs. The distance of clicking porpoises in relation to the CPOD registrations could be determined, which allowed for the calculation of the detection function describing the probability of porpoises being detected at a given distance from the CPOD; a vital input into the porpoise density calculations in SAMBAH.



COSAMM field team performing playbacks to the deployed grid of C-PODs.

After the initial post-processing all data was transferred for further analysis to the Centre for Research into Ecological & Environmental Modeling at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Here the click detections are translated into population density and abundance. The outcome of this analysis is expected in the near future.

Progress meetings and workshops

There is a tradition of arranging the SAMBAH spring progress meeting in connection with the annual European Cetacean Society conference. In 2013 this was held on April 7 in Setubal, Portugal, and in 2014 it was on April 5 in Liège, Belgium. In addition, the Finnish SAMBAH crew hosted a progress meeting on October 22-23, 2013, on the island of Seili at the Archipelago Research Station belonging to Turku University. At these meetings all participants got a chance to present and discuss the current status of the project and to make plans for the pending work. Different aspects of data analyses were also discussed.

On April 15, 2013, a SAMBAH stakeholder workshop was arranged in Gothenburg. The aim was to discuss the future use of SAMBAH data



Participants at the SAMBAH progress meeting in Seili, Finland, Oct 2013.

SAMBAH conference 8-9 December 2014

The SAMBAH end-of-project conference will be held on 8-9 December 2014 at Kolmarden Wildlife Park. Here, the final results of SAMBAH will be presented, including abundance estimates and distribution maps of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea, and the use of the results in management will be discussed. Please visit www.conference.sambah.org for more details and booking information.

On 9-10 December there will be a national workshop dedicated to Swedish marine environment managing bodies.

Other national workshops may be organized by the respective SAMBAH teams.



in the management of the Baltic Sea, and how SAMBAH's findings might affect users of the marine environment, e.g. professional fishermen, constructors of offshore windmill parks, etc. Important participants also came from NGO's engaged in the Baltic Sea. The workshop was successful and we hope to continue this effort in the future.

The stakeholder workshop was arranged back-to-back with the ASCOBANS Jastarnia group meeting, taking place in Gothenburg on April 16-18, 2013. SAMBAH was represented on this meeting and reported on the positive outcome of the stakeholder workshop and the general project progress. In 2014 the Jastarnia Group meeting was held on April 1-3 in Bonn, and SAMBAH was again given the chance to present the current status of the project. SAMBAH will be a major input for the realization of the Jastarnia Plan for the conservation of the Baltic harbor porpoise, hence the great interest in the group to hear about the project progress.

SAMBAH project time extended

Due to the initial delay caused by the severe winter in 2010-2011, all subsequent actions were also delayed. In 2013 it became clear that the project end date had to be postponed, and the European Commission granted SAMBAH an extension until the 30th of September 2015. The extra time will allow us to focus on data analysis during 2014 and leave administrative matters for 2015.

